

section 9, clause 7 of the U.S. Constitution—the authority to appropriate funds. Members of Congress are not even allowed the opportunity to offer amendments to a bill to be voted on by a committee or the Committee of the Whole on a construction project or research program deemed to be in contrary to the rule.

What the ban on congressionally directed spending does do is empower the Executive Branch to dictate to Congress projects, programs and priorities without input from Members. It denies Members the ability to advance alternatives to the President's priorities that better reflect the needs of states, communities and constituents. With this rule, Congress has unilaterally diminished our own power and ceded excessive power to the President. The House of Representatives' "power of the purse" must be more than simply rubber stamping funding for whatever project or program the President proposes.

My attached letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies highlights an example of how the ban on congressionally directed spending denies me—a member of the Appropriations Committee—the opportunity to advocate for a project that has been approved by the Department of Defense, in the Department's funding queue, and is now delayed for arbitrary budget reasons without any consultation with Congress. House rules deny me the opportunity to amend this decision. I find this outrageous and a clear example of how this Congress cedes power to unelected federal officials in the Executive Branch.

It is time to change the rules, repeal the prohibition on congressionally directed spending, and allow Members of Congress to do our job on behalf of the people who elected us.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 1, 2016.

Hon. CHARLIE DENT,
Chair, Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies,
Washington, DC.

Hon. SANFORD BISHOP,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Military
Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related
Agencies, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR DENT AND RANKING MEMBER BISHOP: I am extremely concerned that the President's FY2017 budget proposal has failed to fund a shovel ready Minnesota Army National Guard project that has been in the pipeline since the release of the FY13 budget for FY17. The \$39,000,000 for the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arden Hills, MN (Project Number 270132 in the Department of the Army, Army National Guard FY17 Military Construction budget) now has been moved to FY18. This delay will directly affect the ability of members of the Minnesota National Guard to train effectively and carry out their duties to their utmost potential.

This facility is necessary to house the Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company A 34th Infantry Division currently assigned to the Rosemount, MN Readiness Center, and Company B 34th Infantry Division currently assigned to the Inver Grove Heights, MN Readiness Center. Both of these facilities are undersized and seriously lacking in critical areas that support mission readiness. The construction of the Readiness Center in Arden Hills is long overdue and necessary to relieve over population in other aging National Guard facilities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

What is truly outrageous is that this Congress has ceded the authority of Members,

and particularly Appropriators, under the Constitution, to fund critically significant federal investments in our communities. Congress, by giving up the authority to direct spending and projects, has conceded a vital authority to the Administration. This Military Construction, Veterans Affairs bill makes it clear that the House and the Appropriations Committee now takes its guidance from Administration staff and the Office of Management and Budget, which I find unacceptable. Meanwhile the representatives elected by the American people, including Appropriators, are denied the opportunity to advance vital projects unless granted permission by the Executive Branch.

Therefore, I will not be submitting any requests to the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies because if I were to advocate for the members of the Minnesota Army National Guard and attempt to get funding reinstated in this year's appropriations bill, I would presumably be in violation of the ban on congressionally directed spending.

It is time to change this flawed system.
Sincerely,

BETTY MCCOLLUM,
Member of Congress.

KAY THACKER

HON. CARLOS CURBELO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today we honor the life of Kay Thacker, a woman who worked to make politics nobler and spent every hour of her life dedicated to helping others. As a visitor to the Keys since childhood and a 27-year resident, we will miss Kay Thacker tremendously. She was a woman who embodied the heart of the small and tight-knit community that we are.

Though born in Kentucky, Kay spent much of her life in Indiana. In the late 1960s and into the early 1970s she ran her own salon, Casa de Kay. She received her degree from the University of Indiana and then proceeded to earn the title of Vice President of Sales for Metal Honing Inc. Thankfully, she then decided to make Key Largo her home where she embodied the role of a passionate civic activist.

Tenacious and firm in her principles, Kay stood proudly as an environmental conservationist, advocate for the Arts and a staunch overseer of spending by public agencies. Even in the face of fierce adversity, Kay was a woman who refused to back down. Well known for her stubbornness, Kay knew when to put her foot down and fight for her beliefs, all the while never making that fight personal.

Kay Thacker's impact on our community is far reaching and universally appreciated, even from those that she stood up to. She will forever be remembered for her unyielding devotion to the community that we are all fortunate to call our own.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF
ELLINGTON, MO

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the United Methodist Church of Ellington, MO. The occasion was marked by four services held at the church: a morning Dedication Service, an Afternoon Service, a Youth Service, and an Evangelistic Service held later in the evening, presided over by Pastor Sandy Estes.

United Methodist Church was founded in 1887 by five trustees, Marian Copeland, Leon Daniels, P.B. Smith, U.G. Barnes, and Jefferson Wadlow. It was originally located on Cemetery Hill on land donated by Copeland. As the church grew, so did the congregation, eventually surpassing the capacity of the original property.

In 1909, the church founded the Women's Missionary Society, who purchased the land on which the current church stands today. The cornerstone of the church was laid in 1913, and the construction concluded with a Dedication Ceremony on August 20, 1916. Although the building has since been renovated, much of the Sanctuary is original, including the stained glass and bell tower, which still rings every Sunday service.

The surnames of the five original trustees are still common to the Ellington area, a true testament to the enduring legacy of the United Methodist Church. The church has long served as a staple in the local community, offering a valuable service and place of worship for citizens. Thus, it is my pleasure to recognize its impressive history before the House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO SOSY ROBINSON

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Canyon Lake in Riverside County, California are exceptional. On Friday, March 11th, Sosy Robinson will be honored as the Citizen of the Year by the Canyon Lake Chamber of Commerce.

Born in Pasadena, California, Sosy Robinson was the first American citizen in her family which migrated to this country from the Middle East. Sosy's family moved to Canyon Lake in 2012 from Orange County and she went on to graduate from Temescal Canyon High School. Sosy and her husband, A.J., have six children, whose ages range from two to 25 years old.

In Canyon Lake, Sosy is serving for the second consecutive year as President of the Family Matters Club. The club hosted over 38 events, meetings and family meet-ups last year alone. Sosy is also a member of the Canyon Lake Lioness Club, serves as the official bingo caller at the Canyon Lake Senior Center, and graciously delivers groceries for homebound seniors in need. The nomination